



Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney James R. Klindt
Middle District of Florida

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Jacksonville

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORMER FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS SERGEANT INDICTED

Jacksonville, FL - Acting United States Attorney James R. Klindt today announced the indictment and arrest of WILTON JOSEPH FONTENOT, a 47-year-old resident of Bell, Florida, and a former Sergeant with the Florida Department of Corrections at Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida. The indictment charges FONTENOT with violating the civil rights of an inmate at Union Correctional Institution by striking and choking the inmate on November 22, 2003. It also charges FONTENOT with obstruction of justice by falsifying an official "use of force" report, and by persuading another correctional officer to lie about the incident. The maximum penalties FONTENOT faces if convicted on all counts are 40 years' imprisonment and a fine of \$750,000. FONTENOT was arrested this morning and is expected to make his first appearance this afternoon in federal court in Jacksonville.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Florida Department of Corrections Office of Inspector General. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John J. Sciortino and by Edward K. Chung of the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.